

Friday, July 6, 2018

**Must not**

1 Samuel 29-30

*David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us."*

1 Samuel 30:23

David has gone into battle in the strength of the LORD (30:6b). When he comes upon the destruction of Ziklag and the loss there, he and his army are overwhelmed with grief. But David seeks the LORD through the priest. He does not respond in his own wisdom or strength. So, when the battle is complete and when the victory is won, the people attribute that victory to David, since he was the leader they saw. They declare that the plunder is his (30:20). Next, they treat the plunder as their own and declare that they will not share. David reminds them of what he knows to be true. God gave the victory. God owns the plunder. It is all God's. And since it belongs to God, it will be shared with all God's people equally. A valuable lesson is learned by his army about the character and nature of David and God. Oh, how often I am tempted to declare that what rightfully belongs to the LORD is mine and how quick I am to determine who should be able to benefit from my stuff. I can get caught up in judging whether or not a person has done all they need to do (in my eyes) to receive the blessing of God. There is a term for that. Arrogant selfishness.

*Dear LORD, forgive me for my arrogance and my selfishness. Help me see the times that I determine people have not earned Your favor and, in so doing, keep it for myself. Let me be one, like David, who is quick to give You ownership of all I have. Amen.*

Saturday, July 7, 2018

**Lament**

1 Samuel 31– 2 Samuel 1

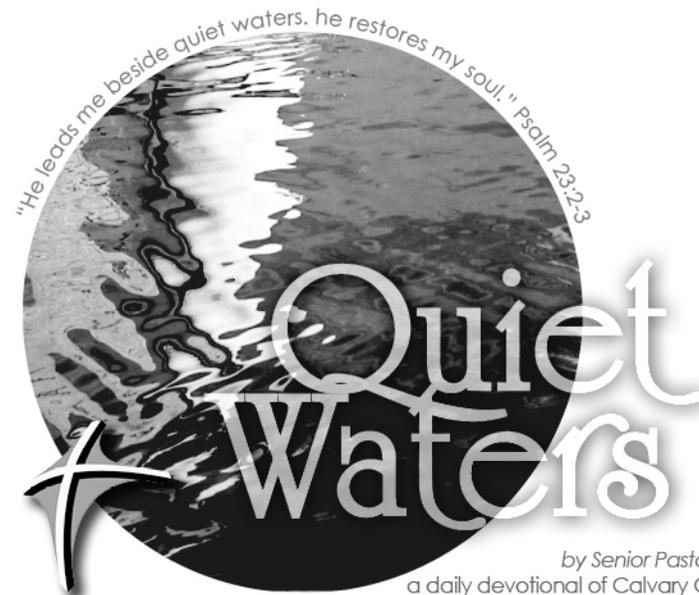
*"David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar)"*

2 Samuel 1:17-18

There is a language of lament. David knew and understood this language all too well, as his expressions of lament here—and in many of the psalms—reveal (Psalm 3 for example). When overtaken by sorrow, David would lament, and here he teaches others how to lament. He orders that this lament be taught and preserved. A nation is in crisis. The anointed one has died. David believes that Saul has been killed, unaware that in the end, it was Saul who took his own life. There is sorrow. Many times people are tempted to move too quickly past sorrow and miss the blessing of having the LORD walk them through the period of mourning and lament. It seems that David was able to find great solace in pouring out his heart of lament to the LORD. In the midst of crisis, many times, the tendency is to shoulder up and move on. David models stopping for a time of sacred sorrow, grieving over that which grieves the LORD. Most often David's laments resolve by focusing on the nature and character of the LORD. In this, I see that I can cry out in lament to the LORD and encourage others to do the same. This is not self-pity; rather, it is the bemoaning of the effects of a fallen world on my life with a longing to find the resolve that comes from the Lover of my soul.

*Dear God, help me, please, to learn this language of lament and to help others learn the language as well, as we learn to pour out our hearts to You. Amen.*

July 2 - 7, 2018



Monday, July 2, 2018

## Not willing

1 Samuel 21-22

*Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me." But the king's officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.* 1 Samuel 22:17

Saul has wandered far from the LORD. His endeavor to overthrow the prophesy of God will consume him until his death (18:28). He has determined that David is the problem and will stop at nothing to eliminate what he views as the only threat to his throne. What he misses in all of this is an opportunity to find right standing with the LORD. While God has spoken and the reign will end with Saul, it does not mean that Saul cannot find forgiveness if he seeks it. It does not mean that Saul cannot still serve the LORD for the rest of his days. Instead, Saul chooses to allow bitterness to consume him. Rather than see his wrongs and repent, he blame-shifts and pursues revenge against an innocent party. In the process, he moves farther and farther away from the LORD, commanding men to do that which he should have been unwilling to do. I must not blame-shift. I need to see the ways that this happens in my life and stand strongly, in the power of the Lord, against it. It moves me to pride that places me into opposition with my God. I must see and repent of the sins in my life at all times.

*Dear God, how many times have I shifted the blame to someone else for the things that I have done? How many times have I accused a brother or sister before You instead of seeing my own folly and repenting? Forgive me please and lead me. Amen.*

Tuesday, July 3, 2018

## Forbid

1 Samuel 23-24

*He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD'S anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD."* 1 Samuel 24:6

David is truly a man after God's own heart. He is in a cave in En Gedi. He is hiding, but it is likely he understands that it is not the cave that is his refuge—rather, it is the Lord. Many believe that Psalm 57 was written at this time. God apparently brings Saul right into David's hands. At least that is what his men thought. David knew better. He knew that it was not to be his hand that came against the anointed one of God. He knew the promise that God had made to him. He knew that he was to be the king after Saul, but he trusted God in the timing of that. He had the perfect opportunity to go ahead of the LORD, but because he was a man after God's own heart, he restrained himself from taking matters into his own hands. We continue to see why God chose David as the king over Israel and the throne that would endure. God looks at the heart. It is the heart that reveals who we truly are. I need so much work in this area. I long to have the strength that David had to wait for the LORD to reveal His timing. I am so tempted to chase after instant gratification instead of waiting for the perfect timing of the LORD. I long to be more like David in his recognition of the LORD's plan.

*Dear LORD, please let me live out my life in patience that comes from a heart that completely trusts You and Your timing. Please reveal to me Your plans and let me rest in those. Forbid it, LORD, that I should in any way move ahead of my Master and my God. Amen.*

Wednesday, July 4, 2018

## Forgive

1 Samuel 25-26

*Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD'S battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request."* 1 Samuel 25: 28, 35

Abigail comes and asks for forgiveness. She asked for the blame to be on her for the offense of her husband and then she asked to be forgiven of that offense. This is humility and wisdom. In so submitting herself, she saved the lives of many and she spared David from carrying the revenge on his conscience. This is indeed selflessness. It is, many times, so very hard to ask for forgiveness, but here we see someone going above and beyond. It is a precious example for us. In her comments, it can be seen that she submits and humbles herself to God and His plan for her life. She is in a difficult situation within her marriage, and yet she seeks protection and forgiveness for her husband, out of reverence for the Lord. She receives her request. David praises God for her, prays a blessing over her, and grants her the forgiveness she seeks. There is a blessing that comes from asking for forgiveness and another larger one that comes from hearing that you have been forgiven. I must remain ready to do both—as often as needed—in the humility that God desires for me to have with Him.

*Dear Lord, please remind me to keep short accounts and to ask for forgiveness when needed. Help me be ready to quickly and joyfully extend forgiveness as well. Amen.*

Thursday, July 5, 2018

## Worship

1 Samuel 27-28

*When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her." "There is one in Endor," they said.* 1 Samuel 28:5-7

Saul continues to disregard the LORD. He refuses to worship God. He seeks to use and manipulate God's priests, prophets, and all the other ways that God speaks to those who truly seek Him. So, Saul seeks help through divination. This is something that is strictly forbidden. That does not slow Saul down. He has forgotten all about how to worship God, it seems. He is approaching God on his own terms—not God's. That is not worship. So Samuel appears—or at least seems to. If he does, it is only because God has determined to have this be the case. It has not happened through the medium. Once again, Saul hears that his reign will end. Only now, there is a timeframe. Once again, Saul has an opportunity to repent but does not. He refuses to worship the Lord. He worships only himself. I must remember that I cannot come to God on my own terms and call that worship. It is attempted manipulation of the most Holy God.

*Lord, I come to You and worship You on Your terms. Forgive the times I come into worship looking for a benefit of my own. Help me understand the depth of my sin that causes that desire in me and lead me into sweet repentance. Amen.*